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Barka Affair Strains Ties Of 2 Nations

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PARIS, Nov. 12 — The kidnapping of Moroccan leftist opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka in Paris is progressively embroiling France and Morocco and wrecking the excellent relations that until a fortnight ago existed between the two countries.

King Hassan II, who was to have stopped in Paris on his way back from a visit to West Germany at the end of this month, has canceled those plans. French Agriculture Minister Edgard Pisani has called off a trip to Rabat where he was scheduled to help initiate a new agriculture institute, set up with French assistance.

The Moroccans are angry over French police allegations that Moroccan Interior Minister Mohammed Oufkir was personally involved in the kidnapping. Oufkir is said to have feared that Ben Barka would be taken into the Rabat government in an effort by the King to win leftist support for his regime and that this would erode his (Oufkir's) own power.

What the French are asking now is the extradition of Georges Bouchecuche, be-

lieved to have been the leader of the group of professional criminals who carried out the kidnapping. He fled to Morocco immediately after the crime, but the Moroccan police profess to have lost track of him. In the present atmosphere, it is thought unlikely that the Moroccan authorities are really trying to locate him.

French police are also increasingly skeptical about the possibility that Ben Barka will ever be found alive. Their theory is that he was probably killed shortly after the kidnapping.

But the Moroccans are suggesting that it was the French police, not Moroccans, who kidnapped Ben Barka. Minister of Agriculture Mahjoubi Ahardane, in an interview Thursday, said sarcastically: "We are too great novices and lack too much experience to succeed in so complex an operation. For that, it would be necessary for our agents to benefit by the aid of one of the French services whose competence in the matter has already been proved."

The Moroccan insinuation against the French police shifts ground from a previous Moroccan hint that the operation was performed by the American Central Intelligence Agency, Rabat's desire being, apparently, to pin the responsibility on anyone other than Moroccans. But the Moroccan population does not seem to be entirely convinced that its government is blameless, since a 48-hour protest strike against the Ben Barka kidnapping was called today.

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